

Poughkeepsie, NY – Congressman John Hall (NY-19) joined elected officials in welcoming senior representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Interior, Environmental Protection Agency and other federal and state agencies today for a public listening session regarding “America’s Great Outdoors Initiative” here at the Marist College Student Center.

In April 2010, President Barack Obama signed a memo establishing the “America’s Great Outdoors Initiative” to develop a conservation agenda worthy of the 21st century to reconnect Americans with our great outdoors. In establishing this agenda, President Obama directed the principal leaders of the America’s Great Outdoors Initiative to travel across the country to listen and learn from people directly involved in finding grassroots solutions to conserving our lands and waters and reconnecting Americans to the outdoors.

During his welcoming remarks, Rep. Hall said:

“It is my great pleasure to be here this morning and take part in this listening session to help develop programs and initiatives designed to reconnect Americans with their natural environment... As a longtime resident of the Hudson Valley and someone who is familiar with its majestic river and its many wonders among the hills and byways, I can think of no better place to have a conversation about rediscovering the natural beauty that makes our country so great.

“This listening tour gives all of us an opportunity to affirm the countless ways our nation is so special. And it also lets us focus on the issues that will determine whether we have been responsible stewards of our natural wonders for generations of future Americans.

“Many of those here today have been deeply committed to keeping the Hudson River and its surrounding region protected from pollution, sprawl and environmental abuse. Their tireless efforts as advocates, educators and watch dogs have, in turn, spurred countless citizens and government leaders to join the fight and pass landmark laws, like the Clean Water Act of 1973.

“As we look to create new jobs and ensure a strong future for all Americans, let us consider how precious our natural resources are, and how the remarkable beauty and social vibrancy here in

the Hudson Valley can serve as an inspiration to us all and strengthen us as well.

“Today, the Hudson Valley hosts remarkably diverse communities and attracts all kinds of people with innovative and inventive dreams for tomorrow. It is truly one of the most special places on the planet, as many of us know and are only too happy to explain why.”